



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**NW Innovation Resource Center Announces Commercialization Funding**

**Bellingham, WA – October 7, 2011** – The NW Innovation Resource Center (NWIRC) is pleased to announce the creation of a community commercialization service to assist inventors in the area with the evaluation of the economic value of their intellectual property. The WA Economic Development Commission has awarded funding to the NWIRC for an Entrepreneur in Residence (EIR) position to implement this service.

Northwest Washington has a history of innovation as illustrated by research from the Technology Alliance Group which revealed over 70 patents awarded in Whatcom County annually for the past several years. These inventions often lay dormant when intellectual property holders are not interested in or equipped to take the steps required to determine potential commercial value.

“Whatcom County has a history of community based economic innovation, but little means to capitalize upon an already vibrant wealth of knowledge and ideas,” said Sen. Kevin Ranker, D-Orcas Island. “Investing in this center will convert that innovation into real jobs. With the county continuing to struggle in the fight against unemployment, this investment could not come at a more critical time.”

“If we hope to emerge in a position of competitive strength from this recession, as well as future recessions, it will be because we properly focused on innovation,” said Sen. Jim Kastama, chair of the Senate Economic Development, Trade & Innovation Committee. “At a time when jobs and entire industries are vanishing, growth requires that we focus on solutions to tomorrow’s needs.”

“Senators Ranker and Kastama recognize that individuals in more rural communities are often an untapped resource for innovation” stated Debbie Ahl, chair of the NWIRC. “Their efforts have been pivotal in piloting this service.”

The NWIRC will provide assistance to inventors in determining the best method to generate commercial value from their inventions. If a business can be started as the commercialization vehicle, the NWIRC’s Accelerator Program for new businesses will become involved to provide support and guidance to establish and grow the business. This commercialization pilot provides a means for broader participation in innovation throughout the area.

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**About the NW Innovation Resource Center** The NW Innovation Resource Center is a non-profit organization providing economic opportunities and jobs through innovation. Please see [www.nwirc.com](http://www.nwirc.com) for additional information.